

Rowe Board of Selectmen Meeting  
August 8, 2019  
6:30 P.M.  
Rowe Town Hall – Meeting Room 1

**Board of Selectmen:** Chair Charles Sokol (Remote Participation), Vice-Chair Jennifer Morse, Selectman Ed Silva  
**Administrative Staff:** Paul McLatchy III, Administrative Assistant (Also Planning Board Member)  
**Other Attendees:** Daniel Burke, Planning Board Member; Lance Larned, Highway Superintendent; David Roberson, Planning Board Chair  
**Audience of Citizens:** Jessica Albrecht (arrived 6:35), Danielle Larned, Joanne Semanie

**Call to Order:** Vice-Chair Morse called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M., a quorum of the board present.

**Remote Participation:** Board of Selectmen Chair Chuck Sokol was called by phone, and was unable to participate in person due to distance. Vice-Chair Morse will chair the meeting, and all votes taken must be by roll-call vote.

**Planning Board Vacancy:** Planning Board member Douglas Wilson resigned July 17<sup>th</sup>. Three of the four remaining members met jointly with the Board of Selectmen to jointly appoint a fifth member until the May 2020 election.

**NOMINATION: Planning Board Chair David Roberson nominated Jessica Albrecht, and the nomination was seconded by Daniel Burke. With no further nominations, the votes were as follows:**

**Planning Board**

<b><u>Chair David Roberson</u></b>	<b><u>Aye</u></b>
<b><u>Daniel Burke</u></b>	<b><u>Aye</u></b>
<b><u>Paul McLatchy III</u></b>	<b><u>Aye</u></b>

**Board of Selectmen**

<b><u>Chair Chuck Sokol</u></b>	<b><u>Aye</u></b>
<b><u>Vice-Chair Jennifer Morse</u></b>	<b><u>Aye</u></b>
<b><u>Selectman Ed Silva</u></b>	<b><u>Nay</u></b>

By a vote of 5-1, Jessica Albrecht was appointed until May 2020. Selectman Silva explained that his vote against Ms. Albrecht was due to what he saw as generally negative treatment to town employees, and opined that the Planning Board should give her a copy of the new code of conduct policy that was just adopted. Chair Roberson declined to do so, stating it was the Board of Selectmen's responsibility to make sure she received it.

The Planning Board adjourned at 6:33, and members David Roberson and Daniel Burke departed the meeting.

**DPW:** The Board welcomed Highway Superintendent Lance Larned to the meeting, and invited him to sit at the table.

**Comp Time:** The most pressing issue right now for the Board is the accumulation of comp time by the Superintendent. Neither the Board nor Superintendent Larned are trying to negatively impact the other- both parties are simply looking for everyone to be on the same page. No one is able to locate a signed

copy of his superintendent hire letter, which would include information on comp time. A draft from 2014 was found, but it is unsigned. Superintendent Larned produced a copy of a set of minutes from 2015 where the Board of Selectmen authorized him to earn compensatory time due to the large number of overtime hours worked. Hire letters from previous superintendents James Taylor and Leonard "Pete" Brown were found, and both had 300 hours of overtime factored into his salary calculation.

Superintendent Larned is not often able to use his comp time, and sometimes doesn't even get to use all of his vacation time due to year-round job demands. A spreadsheet comparing the salaries and pay methods of highway superintendents' from around Franklin County was reviewed. After brief discussion, the Board of Selectmen and Superintendent Larned seemed to tentatively agree that moving forward the first three hundred (300) hours of overtime would not be compensated for and would be built into his salary. Any overtime above the 300 hours would earn comp time. No vote was taken, but a written agreement will be drafted with details for both parties to review and hopefully approve at a future meeting.

Vacation Time: Board members will work with Treasurer Joanne Semanie to work on tracking vacation hours for all employees so that they are aware of their current accruals. Chair Sokol expressed his opinion that paid time off is as much a part of the compensation package as an employee's salary. As such any unused time would result in an employee going unpaid for something they have earned.

Superintendent Position: Selectman Silva indicated that he is not a fan of appointed positions in general, as a new Board of Selectmen could come in and simply choose not to renew an appointment, even without cause. He would like to see it more merit-based, which Vice-Chair Morse agreed with.

Departure: Superintendent Larned, Danielle Larned, and Jessica Albrecht departed the meeting at 6:53.

**Town Counsel:** Mr. McLatchy reported on his findings of town counsels in Western Massachusetts. The Board has had concerns about the timeliness of the current counsel's responses. Mr. McLatchy has researched over a half-dozen different firms, and concluded that the two most frequently utilized firms in the area are KP Law, formerly Kopelmann and Paige and based in Boston, and current town counsel Donna MacNicol in Greenfield. KP Law was employed by the town as town counsel for many years. Mr. McLatchy was asked to coordinate and have an attorney from KP Law meet with the Board, preferably at their next meeting.

**Minutes:** The following minutes were addressed:

June 27<sup>th</sup>: The June 27<sup>th</sup> minutes were approved at the previous meeting, and were signed.

August 1<sup>st</sup>: The minutes of August 1<sup>st</sup> were presented.

**MOTION TO APPROVE: A motion to approve the minutes was made by Vice-Chair Morse, seconded by Chair Sokol, and passed unanimously in favor:**

**Chair Chuck Sokol**                      **Aye**

**Vice-Chair Jennifer Morse**       **Aye**

**Selectman Ed Silva**                   **Aye**

**Remaining Business:** As Chair Sokol was not physically present and this meeting was called just to address several specific issues, it was felt that the rest of the agenda should be tabled.

**MOTION TO TABLE: A motion to table all remaining business until the next meeting was made by Chair Sokol, seconded by Vice-Chair Morse, and passed unanimously in favor:**

**Chair Chuck Sokol**                      **Aye**  
**Vice-Chair Jennifer Morse**   **Aye**  
**Selectman Ed Silva**                      **Aye**

**Adjourn:** With no further business to attend to:

**MOTION TO ADJOURN: A motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:02 was made by Vice-Chair Morse, seconded by Chair Sokol, and passed unanimously in favor:**

**Chair Chuck Sokol**                      **Aye**  
**Vice-Chair Jennifer Morse**   **Aye**  
**Selectman Ed Silva**                      **Aye**

*Respectfully Submitted,*  
Paul McLatchy III  
Administrative Assistant to the Boards

Approved on: 8/22/2019

  
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*Charles Sokol, Chairman*

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*Jennifer Morse, Vice-Chair*

  
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*Edward Silva, Selectman*

**Documents:**

1. Agenda
2. Highway Superintendent Documents:
  - a. Unsigned Salary and Benefits Letter, July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2017
  - b. Unsigned Wages and Benefits Letter, Effective July 1, 2015
  - c. Minutes of January 14, 2015 Board of Selectmen Meeting
  - d. Superintendent Wage/Salary- "Comp" Time Comparison